

Fall 2026

Press Kit

*For organizations engaging with First Light
and the Wabanaki Commission on Land &
Stewardship*



Guidance and sample language to support organizations telling public stories of work done in collaboration with First Light, the Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship, and Wabanaki Nations, nonprofits, and individuals

Centering respectful storytelling practices, and placing individual projects within a broader context of return



**WABANAKI
COMMISSION**
ON LAND AND STEWARDSHIP



**FIRST
LIGHT**

Questions for Partners

before making plans to share a story

Ask yourself

- Who benefits from this story?
- Who could be harmed by this story?
- Who is asking for the story to be told?
- Is your organization prepared to *not* tell this story, if your partners don't want it told?

Tip!

If you're working on a project that might prompt a reporter to cold call your ED or team, have these conversations early on, and brief the people who might get called.

Ask Wabanaki partners

- Do you want the story to be told? (If no, stop here)
- Who will be part of telling it? Who will be quoted?
- Are there other people who should be consulted about this story?
- Who needs to approve the language?
- What will the story focus on?
- If it's about a land return, should any information be included or avoided that could enable someone to locate the land?
- Who will the audience be?
- What outlet(s) will cover the story, and where will it be shared?

Guidance for Reporters

When talking with reporters:

- Ask who else they are speaking to for this story
- Share any specific requests you and your partners agreed upon (i.e. only Wabanaki partners are quoted, the exact location of the land is not disclosed, etc...)
- Use the sample language and links below as guidance when referencing the Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship, First Light, Tributary, and the Wolankeyutomone Kisi Apaciyewik Fund
- Ask the reporter to contact Wabanaki project partners

Tip!

Consider accessibility: Prioritize media outlets with good track records of covering Wabanaki stories. See if it's possible to avoid paywalls.

Reporters we have strong relationships with

- Reuben Schafir, Portland Press Herald
- Susan Sharon, Maine Public
- Kathleen Tomaselli, Bangor Daily News
- Rothery Sullivan, Bangor WABI
- Nate Hathaway, Maine Monitor



Sample Language:

We ask organizations to use the following language as guidance:

For the Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship:

“The Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship is a Wabanaki intertribal NGO focused on improving the health and well-being of Wabanaki people through a sustained effort to expand their access, management, and ownership of lands to practice their land-based cultures across Wabanaki homeland in what is now the State of Maine.”

[Link](#) to their website

Contact person: Darren Ranco, Executive Director, Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship, dranco@dawnlandreturn.org.

For First Light:

“First Light is a community of non-native conservation organizations across Wabanaki homelands working together to return land, money, and decision-making authority to Wabanaki communities.”

[Link](#) to their website

Contact person: Jesse Saffire, jesse@firstlightmaine.org

When referencing both organizations together:

Include the language and links above, and:

“The Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship and First Light work together, each within their own nations and communities, with the shared goals of supporting land reconnection for Wabanaki Nations and people.”

Tip!

For guidance about how to accurately and respectfully speak about Wabanaki people, history, land, and culture, check out the [Wabanaki Alliance Media & Style Guide](#)



Sample Language, continued:

We ask organizations to use the following language as guidance:

When talking about an individual Tributary project:

Include language about Tributary as a whole:

“This project is part of the Tributary Land Returns, a collaboration between the federally recognized Wabanaki Tribes in Maine and seven land-based organizations, to return over 50,000 acres of land to Wabanaki communities. The Tributary Land Returns return stewardship to lakes, rivers, wetlands, and coastal islands, and support Wabanaki land care without restriction.”

[Link](#) to Tributary webpage

Contact people: Brett Ciccotelli, Core Staff on Returning, First Light, brett@firstlightmaine.org, and Darren Ranco, Executive Director, Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship, dranco@dawnlandreturn.org.

For the Wolankeyutomone Kisi Apaciyewik Fund

“The Wolankeyutomone Kisi Apaciyewik Fund – translated from Passamaquoddy to “let us take good care of what has returned” – is a Wabanaki participatory grantmaking program that provides unrestricted funding to repair, rebuild, and sustain Wabanaki relationship, kinship, and access to place. As a caretaking fund, the Wabanaki Commission directly invests in Wabanaki-led efforts that strengthen relationships with land, culture, language, and community.”

[Link](#) to Wolankeyutomone Kisi Apaciyewik Fund webpage

Contact person: Frances Soctomah, Collaborative Fund Manager, Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship, fsoctomah@dawnlandreturn.org

Tip!

After a big story airs, consider assigning a staff member to monitor social media and respond to comments and questions.

If you have questions about this press kit, please contact Jesse Saffire, jesse@firstlightmaine.org

First Light and the Wabanaki Commission on Land & Stewardship thank you for consulting our press kit!

